1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
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miniature four-legged shelter to protect it from the rain, with a gabled roof of sago thatch, and perhaps underneath the roof a little platform. On this platform may be found an old bamboo cylinder pipe, a lime gourd, perhaps a handful of withered betel-nuts; and besides these a few fragments—fresh or mouldy—of cooked taro. These are so placed for the spirit of the departed, or, to use the Aiga word, the *sowai*. It will come by night and refresh itself to that extent which is proper for a spirit, or as a native will say, with a twinkle in his eye, taking no more than an ant might eat. In addition to these offerings, there may be found certain mementoes of the deceased—an old banana-seed necklace, a shell bracelet, in one case a broken gourd that had been a urinary for an invalid and bed-ridden old man.

When the preparations for the entertainment are complete the *naterari* is removed, and with its removal the coconut tabu comes to an end. Normally, it would appear, the *naterari* stands through the time of feasting and is removed afterwards. Sometimes, I am told, the provisions for the feast are displayed before the post—row upon row of wooden dishes piled with cooked food—and it is called upon to witness the feast in its honour.

There is still something of reverence in the final disposal of the *naterari*. When I suggested chopping it up for firewood I was made to feel that this was rather a bad joke. In the inland village it was put aside in the outskirts of the bush, sometimes with a small platform close by for a continuation of the food offerings, and there allowed to decay. On the river Opi it is placed, with other paraphernalia of the dance, upon a raft; with some little ceremony this raft is guided into midstream and released to follow its unattended course toward the sea. Sometimes the *naterari* is stowed away in a house. At any rate it is not simply thrown away and disregarded. For this two reasons are given: first, that the *sowai* or spirit would be angry; second, that the people feel too sorrowful to treat the *naterari* thus.

It is worth referring to the forms or patterns of the tabu post. The variety is very great, for each example seems to

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take shape from the individual carver's imagination. There is no such thing as a distinctive clan device; and there are no names for particular patterns. In one village a newly erected *naterari* of an unusually pretentious character had been recently substituted for another of inferior workmanship. The latter, though discarded, had not been destroyed. Both belonged to the same clan and village and were set up for the same occasion, but they were wholly different in pattern and appearance.

The treatments range from the very simplest of formal designs to somewhat elaborate representations of the human figure. The latter probably throw some light upon the former. For instance, the prevalent device of cutting through the post so as to leave two separate supports may be reminiscent of the obviously human-like legs of more elaborate figures. There are many *naterari* which apparently do not conform to the implied explanation, but nevertheless it may be said that many do show a slight, and others an unmistakable, anthropomorphic character. The sketches (Fig. 25) were made at various times and entirely at random.

Enough has been said to show that the *naterari* is very closely associated with the dead man for whom the feast is to be made. I do not remember hearing in so many words that the *naterari* actually represented such and such a dead man; but, if I may repeat what was written in Chapter VIII, the fact that the feast is definitely made for the dead man, the care with which the *naterari* is treated, the offerings made to it, the mementoes of the deceased which are attached to it, and the ceremonious way in which it is finally disposed of, would all lend colour to the suggestion that it is regarded as a representative of the dead and is in imagination identified with him. One could not go so far as to say that it was actually an image of him; but in view of its occasionally striking anthropomorphism, it is not impossible that originally the *naterari* was in reality set up as a crude model of the dead. I may give one illustration to show that this idea, or a similar one, has not been entirely forgotten. In one sketch primitively painted on one facet of a post, may be

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seen the figure of a man. The *naterari* was cut out, set up, and painted by one Bararipa, pending a feast in honour of his deceased father Komona; and the figure, by Bararipa's word, was a picture of Komona himself. 765 778 532

A further bond between the *naterari* and the dead resides in the fact that the tabu post is normally formed of the particular wood which is his plant emblem, and hence is likely to be his clan namesake. 765 778

The most interesting point in regard to the *naterari* is the fact that food offerings are made to it. Of this subject I shall speak at greater length when we discuss the belief in survival after death. In the meantime I may give an account of the dance and drama which have at least some significance as ceremonies of mourning.

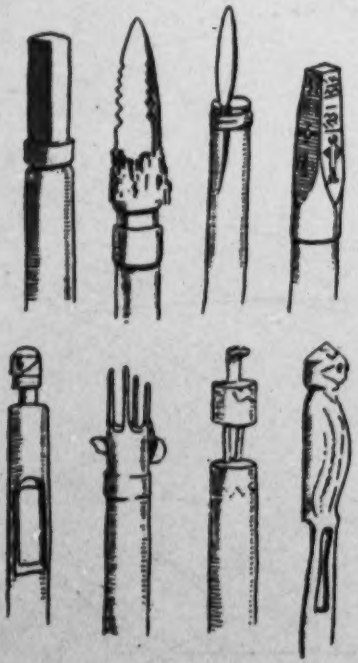

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FIG. 25. Examples of *Naterari*, or Tabu Posts

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(*a*) Puppet used in the Drama at Poho

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(*b*) The *Siwari* Ceremony

PLATE XXXIV [facing p. 254]